

# Covenant School of Nursing

## Disciplinary Action Summary Assignment

### Instructional Module 2

Student Name: Leah Gonzales

Date: 4/9/2025

DAS Assignment # 2

Name of the defendant: Nichelle Rae Dendy, RN

License number of the defendant: 872280

Date(s) and BON decision(s) taken against the license: Formal charges August 18, 2021, Peer assistance Program

June 14, 2022, License **REVOKED**

Type of action(s) imposed to retain or regain licensure, if applicable (ex.: warning with stipulations, etc.)

- *Use the space below to describe the events which led to the action(s) taken against the license. If multiple charges were in play, be sure and cite each of them, e.g. drug diversion, HIPAA violation, abandonment, etc.*
  - o In this case Nichelle had an occurrence that led the Texas Board of Nursing to have Nichelle enroll in and complete the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses. On or around April 8, 2020, Nichelle was employed at Northwest Texas Healthcare System, Amarillo, Texas this is where she had intemperate use of methamphetamine. She had a urine drug test where it had come back positive for the drug. Nichelle admitted she inhaled the drug the weekend before her shift. Nichelle stated that she knew she needed help and would not go back into nursing until she recovered. Nichelle then stated she was willing to participate in the peer assistance program. On August 18, 2021, Nichelle was approved for the peer assistance program, she then had forty-five days to apply to Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses. Within ninety days following the effective date Nichelle had to sign and execute the Texas Peer Assistance Program and complete her enrollment process. If Nichelle complied and met all the requirements, she then would be able to keep her license to practice nursing in the state of Texas.
  - o The second charge entered on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022; Nichelle failed to appear in accordance with the requirements she needed to do to continue practicing her nursing license. Nichelle was given the opportunity to show compliance with all the requirements but since those requirements were not met the Board of Nursing ordered her license to practice nursing in the State of Texas be revoked. February 11, 2022, Nichelle was railing to follow the agreed order that was issued to her on November 5, 2021. Nichelle failed to meet all the requirements of the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses participation within the required time. Within forty-five days Nichelle needed to apply to Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses and within ninety days Nichelle needed to complete the enrollment process along with a payment of 500 hundred dollars.

- *Use the space below to provide a description of measures you think could have prevented any action being taken against the license and/or would have prevented harm to the patient, if harm occurred.*
  - o To prevent getting her license revoked Nichelle could have enrolled and finished the Texas Peer Assistance Program and paid her fine of 500 dollars. Then she could continue to practice her license. What could have prevented this entire situation is Nichelle avoiding methamphetamine overall. Although it is easier said than done and we never know what someone is going through in life. Nichelle could have been using it for emotional stability to get her through her long work hours. She could have used methamphetamine to manage anxiety or depression. Although it is sad that Nichelle felt the need to take methamphetamine those actions have consequences for any healthcare worker. No harm had occurred to any patient during Nichelle's care, but it could have impacted on her performance and patient care.
  
- *Identify ALL universal competencies (4-5) that were violated and explain how in detail to reflect your understanding and importance of the universal competencies.*
  - o **Professional Role:** was not met when Nichelle decided to take methamphetamine. Since she took the drug before her shift, she came to work impaired, and this can lead to patient harm and legal consequences. She violated her ethical duty to provide safe competent care. Violating professional standards does not mean Nichelle was providing intentional harm but nursing is built on trust.
  - o **Critical Thinking:** was not met when Nichelle proceeded to use substances without thinking of the consequences or maybe she thought she would not get caught. Looking at a different perspective, substance abuse also directly undermines any critical thinking skills. While under the influence of drugs this impaired Nichelle's critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills are key in nursing for making ethical decisions which are essential for patient safety. Substances affect the brain's ability to process information clearly and this could lead to poor clinical decisions. Substance abuse also reduces attention and could possibly create an inability to prioritize tasks based on urgency. Along with interfering with Nichelle's cognitive functions and responsibilities such as her pain priority, taking care of patients.
  - o **Human Caring:** Nichelle did not meet human caring because being high at work is a huge risk to patient safety. Patients in such a vulnerable state rely on and trust nurses for consistent, safe care. This can damage any professional relationships with patients, family, and any other healthcare workers. Mishandling equipment is a mistake almost every nurse makes in their career, but the risks are higher when using substances. This gives it a high risk for patient injury, and unreliable care. Nurses are the number one trusted profession; it almost seems careless to not give our patients the absolute best care we can.
  - o **Communication:** Nichelle verbally expressed that she needed help and did not want to continue practicing nursing without seeking help at first. She also agreed to complete the Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses but did not comply. She did take a drug test which resulted in the finding the methamphetamine in Nichelle's system. She violated an agency protocol concerning substance abuse and impairment protocol. Nichelle, not getting the help she needed with the program after complying to do so could also be considered a type of miscommunication.
  
- *Use the space below to describe what actions you think a prudent nurse would take as the first to person to discover the event described. In other words, you are the one who discovers the patient has*

*been harmed by the nurse or you have discovered the impairment or criminal activity cited in the disciplinary action.*

- o If I were to discover to suspect one of my coworker's abusing substances, I would definitely approach carefully. At first, I would be alert for any signs or changes in my coworker's behavior. I would not direct this coworker directly because it may create some conflict and maybe escalate the situation. I would start off by recognizing patterns that could raise my concern and avoid making any assumptions. If I suspected my coworker was taking drugs or if I witnessed it I would report it to a supervisor such as a nurse manager or charge nurse immediately. Knowing that nursing is rough with the long hours I would never judge because everyone goes through trials and tribulations. I would make sure all my coworkers' patients were safe because patient safety would be my number one concern. After reporting I would avoid sharing any suspicions with other coworkers or peers because this is still someone else's life, and it should remain private.